

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

S E C R E T STATE 281296

EXDIS

E.O. 11652:

TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN

SUBJECT: EVENTS IN BANGLADESH

1. SEPTTEL WILL PROVIDE GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR USE BY POSTS IN DISCUSSING SITUATION IN BANGLADESH. IN THE CASE OF IRAN, HOWEVER, WE THINK THE EMBASSY SHOULD TAKE AN EARLY INITIATIVE IN MAKING OUR CONCERNS KNOWN AT AN APPROPRIATELY HIGH LEVEL.

2. EMBASSY SHOULD INFORM THE IRANIANS THAT WE HAVE BEEN WATCHING BANGLADESH CLOSELY AND WITH INCREASING CONCERN. USG NOT ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT HUMAN SUFFERING ARISING OUT OF VARIOUS INCIDENTS BUT BY THE POTENTIAL FOR INSTABILITY IN THE SUBCONTINENT REGION SHOULD EVENTS GET COMPLETELY OUT OF CONTROL WITH OBVIOUS POTENTIAL IMPACT ON THE SECURITY OF IRAN'S EASTERN APPROACHES.

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CONTINUED INSTABILITY IN BANGLADESH WOULD INCREASE

THE PROSPECTS OF OUTSIDE INTERVENTION BY INDIA, THEREBY BRINGING ABOUT AN EVEN MORE VOLATILE SITUATION WHICH COULD ENTANGLE OTHERS IN REACTION.

3. WE HAVE STEERED CLEAR OF ANY MEDIATION ROLE BUT HAVE TRIED TO WHAT WE COULD TO IMPROVE THE PERCEPTIONS

THAT DACCA AND DELHI HAVE OF EACH OTHER'S CONCERNS IN THE HOPE THAT THIS WOULD DETER RASH ACTIONS FLOWING FROM MISCALCULATION AND MISUNDERSTANDING. WE HAVE THEREFORE STRESSED IN DACCA THAT WE CONSIDER IT IMPORTANT THAT (A) BANGLADESH MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH INDIA, (B) PREVENT COMMUNAL DISTURBANCES, WHICH COULD LEAD TO AN EXODUS OF HINDU REFUGEES INTO INDIA, AND (C) AVOID GETTING ENTANGLED IN A FRUITLESS BALANCE OF POWER GAME. WE HAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT THE BANGLADESH AUTHORITIES HAVE UNDERSTOOD THE MESSAGE, BUT WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT THEY MAY HAVE ONLY LIMITED CONTROL OVER EVENTS IN THIS CONFUSED PERIOD.

4. IN SIMILAR VEIN, WE HAVE TOLD THE INDIANS THAT WE WERE CERTAIN THEY WOULD AGREE WITH US THAT IT WOULD BE SERIOUSLY DETRIMENTAL TO THE PROSPECTS FOR STABILITY IN THE SUBCONTINENT WERE EXTERNAL POWERS TO ENGAGE THEMSELVES IN THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF BANGLADESH. THE INDIANS HAVE ALSO BEEN INFORMED OF OUR REPRESENTATIONS TO THE BGD IN DACCA.

5. WE HAVE HEARD NUMEROUS RUMORS ABOUT INDIAN INTENTIONS AGAINST BANGLADESH, BUT TO DATE HAVE NO HARD EVIDENCE THAT THE GOI HAS DECIDED TO INTERVENE MILITARILY. THE INDIANS HAVE, HOWEVER, IMPLIED ALL ALONG THAT THE OUTBREAK OF COMMUNAL DISTURBANCES AND A CONSEQUENT EXODUS OF HINDU REFUGEES COULD TRIGGER THEIR INVOLVEMENT. SHOULD THE INDIANS DECIDE TO INTERVENE, THEY COULD MOVE IN A MATTER OF A FEW DAYS. DOUBTLESS, THE ATTACK ON THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER WILL INCREASE INDIAN APPREHENSIONS.

6. WE HAVE, OF COURSE, KEPT IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE
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PAKISTANIS ABOUT BANGLADESH. WE WOULD WELCOME IRAN'S ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION. GIVEN IRAN'S INTEREST AND INFLUENCE WITH ALL THE COUNTRIES OF THE SUBCONTINENT, WE WOULD APPRECIATE LEARNING OF ANY THOUGHTS THEY MIGHT HAVE AS TO HOW THEY MIGHT WEIGH IN IN BOTH DELHI AND DACCA TO HELP IN DEFUSING AND CALMING THE SITUATION. KISSINGER

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